

Search:

 Christianbook.com  
1-800-CHRISTIAN

## William MacDonald Archive



[One Day at a Time](#)

[Audio](#)

[Bio](#)

[Kevin Engle recollections](#)

[Remembrances on Facebook](#)

AUTHORS



feedjit

[Home](#) » [I Will Build My Church](#)

## Chapter 4: Christian Leadership: Qualities, Types and Methods

Submitted by [James Gunn](#) on Thu, 07/31/2008 - 17:06 [Ecclesiology \(The Assembly/Local Church\)](#)

God intended that the Church be administrative, but He never proposed that she become legislative. All the principles necessary for Church government have been given by divine revelation *in* the New Testament; they are there ready to direct in all Church administration.

The professing Church departed long ago from this scriptural concept of rule, and for centuries has formulated decrees, issued edicts and published bulls, and sold indulgences.

When a church, or a circle of churches, demands as a ground for fellowship a specified conformity to a fixed code of church practices, that church, or circle of churches, in a degree has become legislative.

The subject of Church administration introduces us to the matter of leadership in the assembly.

### Leadership

There is no single passage in the New Testament that deals exclusively with this subject; notwithstanding, mention is made of many exemplary leaders. We therefore may learn by example what we cannot learn from precept.

At the council in Jerusalem ([Acts 15](#)) there were gathered most of the leaders in the early Church. Peter, James, and John represented the church at Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas, the churches of the Gentiles. There were also present Matthias and Silas, chief men among the brethren. A reference to these brethren would give much instruction in Christian leadership. The leadership given by these men apparently had the approval of the Lord and the confidence of the whole Church.

There are four aspects of this subject we must consider: the qualities of leadership, the types of leadership, the methods of leadership, and the purpose of leadership.

*The qualities of leadership:* It has been said that leaders are born; they are not made. This is only partially true. Even one who is born with an imposing personality is of little value until he has developed certain qualities.

Personality has been defined as the sum total of all that a man is physically, ethically, and spiritually. Some personalities are repellent, others attractive. If one is going to be a good leader among God's people, he should develop those qualities which make personality attractive. We shall consider some qualities that are formative, some that are communicative, and some that are specific.

*Formative qualities:* The one that we shall consider first is *sociability*. An unfriendly person is not a good leader. The Apostle Paul was an exceedingly friendly person. He is never seen alone, not even in prison. He speaks of his yokefellow ([Phil. 4:3](#)), his workfellow ([Rom. 16:21](#)), his fellowservant ([Col. 4:7](#)), his fellow-workers ([Col. 4:11](#)), and his fellowprisoner ([Col. 4:10](#)). The Apostle John wrote, "I John, who am your brother and companion" ([Rev. 1:9](#)).

It was said of the supreme example, our Lord Jesus, that He was the friend of publicans and sinners. When speaking to His disciples about the death of Lazarus, the Lord Jesus called him "Our friend Lazarus" ([John 11:11](#)). This quality of friendliness is very necessary in the making of a good leader.

A second necessary quality is *responsibility*. One of the greatest detriments to our testimony for God today is the irresponsibility shown by many of the Lord's people. A leader must be willing to assume responsibility. Paul, speaking of what he had endured for the gospel's sake, added this, "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" ([II Cor. 11:28](#)). What need there is today for such responsible brethren!

Another of these formative qualities is *knowledge*. To be a teacher one must know his subject; to be a guide one must know the way; to be a shepherd one must know the sheep and their needs. To be a leader in the assembly, one must apply himself with diligence and patience to learn the truth of God, the divine principles for directing the people of God. Did Paul know history? Listen to him, "I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud" ([I Cor. 10:1](#)). Did he know prophecy? Listen to him, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep" ([I Thess. 4:13](#)). Did he know evangelism? Listen again, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that often I purposed to come unto you, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles" ([Rom. 1:13](#)).

Premium Video

[Mike Attwood - John 13-16](#)

[Jabe Nicholson - What about Heaven?](#)

Texas Home Loans



Texas Home Loans

Ken & MaryLou Engle II Cor. 5:8



[kenengle.com](#) [SpecialSlideshow](#)

[Philippines](#) [CMMML Obit pdf](#)

[Uplink Obit on Page 9](#)

[Radio Archive](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#)

[Video](#) [Memorial](#) [Eulogy](#)

[HQ Remastered Radio Archive](#)

[MaryLou Leonard Engle Music](#)



[William MacDonald Comments about Ken Engle](#)

Featured

[Food for the Flock](#) - James Gunn/Others

[Ministry in Focus](#) - W. Ross Rainey/Others

[Things New and Old](#) - C. H. Mackintosh/Others

[Help and Food](#) - F.W. Grant/Others

[John Nelson Darby](#) Archive

[Good article about reading JND about JND Synopsis](#)

[William Kelly](#)

## Live Traffic Feed

A visitor from United States viewed "[Chapter 4: Christian Leadership: Qualities, Types and Methods | online library of brethren writers](#)" 16 secs ago

A visitor from United States viewed "[Lesson 8 Grievances And Offenses | online library of brethren writers](#)" 1 min ago

A visitor from Bolton Landing, New York viewed "[The Story Behind "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" | online library of brethren writers](#)" 13 mins ago

A visitor from United States viewed "[Living Discipleship Principles | online library of brethren writers](#)" 14 mins ago

A visitor from United States viewed "[Money Matters | online library of brethren writers](#)" 14 mins ago

A visitor from Texas viewed "[The Story Behind...Let the Lower Lights be Burning | online library of brethren writers](#)" 19 mins ago

A visitor from South Africa viewed "[Spiritual Warfare With Territorial Spirits | online library of brethren writers](#)" 19 mins ago

[Real-time view](#) \* [Get Feed!](#)

To be a successful leader one must know well the matters in which he is going to direct.

A fourth formative quality is *conviction*. Conviction is that inward certainty that expresses itself in outward poise. This certainty results from personal knowledge. When a man knows, and knows that he knows, he has full assurance and spiritual poise, all else to the contrary.

Paul's knowledge of the purposes of God in regard to the oneness of the Body of Christ, enabled him to remonstrate with Peter over his hypocritical action at Antioch ([Gal. 2:11-14](#)).

*Communicative qualities:* No matter how strong and pleasant a leader may be, he must also possess those qualities through which he will make contact with the many followers. If he is strong enough and prepared to lead, he must be able to induce others to follow him. Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" ([I Cor. 11:1](#)). This, a leader may imply without words; he may indicate it by his attitude.

One of the first communicative qualities that will attract other Christians is that of *loyalty*. Loyalty inspires confidence. Where this is lacking no one will follow. If a leader is unreliable, he will produce fears and doubts in those he wishes to guide.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul asserts his loyalty concerning all that was entrusted to him: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" ([II Tim. 4:7](#)).

What an example of loyalty and faithfulness is seen in David's friend Hushai ([II Sam. 15:32-37](#))! David could trust him implicitly, and during the revolt of Absalom follow the advice of this staunch friend.

Another quality that enables one to make contact with followers is *understanding*. Another reference may be made here to the Apostle Paul. Because of the circumstance that forced him to leave the newly formed church in Thessalonica, he was much concerned about their welfare. So heavy did his anxiety become that he endured loneliness in Athens and sent Timothy to enquire about them ([I Thess. 3:1-6](#)). Although he had instructed them that persecution would be their lot, he realized the weakness of humanity. There was no harshness in the attitude of Paul to these saints; he understood human frailty and tried to strengthen them. He sensed that they had misunderstood the doctrine of the rapture of the Church, so he patiently explained it more fully.

How understanding the Lord is! We read, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" ([Jas. 1:5](#)).

There is nothing so magnetically attractive in a personality as understanding of the other party.

A third quality by which people are attracted to a leader is *appreciation*. How we admire those who appreciate what they find in us! Paul, as an example, again presents himself: his letter to the Philippians is one of appreciation. He appreciated their interest and support from the beginning of their Christian career; he appreciated their gift; he appreciated the difficulties that had hindered earlier gifts; and he appreciated the man through whom the gift was sent.

In the same letter he records his appreciation of Timothy, and also of the early services of Euodias and Syntyche.

One last quality in this connection should be mentioned for without it, leadership must be weak; that is *toleration*. A good leader will always be intolerant of sin, especially in himself, but tolerant of the weaknesses and tendencies of others. This is also demonstrated by Paul's attitude to John Mark. Paul was not tolerant with the wrong that Mark had done in forsaking the work of the Lord ([Acts 13:13; 15:36-41](#)), but when proper adjustments had been made and John Mark was restored to confidence, Paul did not hesitate to commend him for fellowship to the church at Colossae ([Col. 4:10](#)), and to commend him highly to Timothy for his work ([II Tim. 4:11](#)).

These, then, are some of the qualities that make a good leader. Some of them form a stalwart character; others enable a leader to gain the confidence of those he would have follow him, and attract them. Over and above these there are certain other important requirements in a church leader.

*Apostolic requirements:* When, in the early Church, it became necessary to have capable men direct the money of the Lord's people, the apostles at Jerusalem specified that leaders in temporal matters possess certain qualities. These qualities are also evident in the careers of the spiritual leaders of the early days. The instructions of the apostles were: "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" ([Acts 6:3](#)).

These three general requirements are: First, a *good reputation*. A leader must not only be honest, he must be an honourable gentleman in every aspect of life. Second, a *genuine spirituality*. To be filled with the Spirit means to be wholly yielded to Him so that He encounters no obstacle in His work through your life. Third, an *evident sagacity*. A leader must not only have knowledge, but he must know when and how to use it.

## Types of Leadership

There are three types of leadership in the New Testament: dictatorial, preferential, and spiritual.

*The dictatorial* ([III John 9-10](#)): We are not certain as to the whereabouts of the local church to which John makes reference. Some have attempted to identify it through the name Gaius,

William MacDonald

J.B. Nicholson

Henry Allan "H.A." Ironside audio

Daniel Snaddon

John F. Walvoord

Billy Graham - 1600 Audio Messages

Wayne Grudem

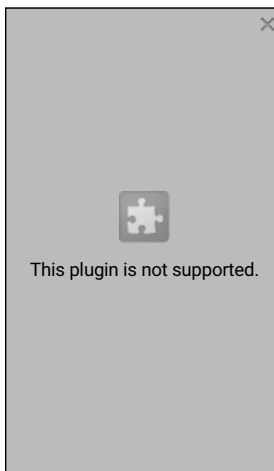
Daniel Wallace Vid

Otis Jean Gibson

Amos & Attwood Video

**Commentary Character Study Ecclesiology (The Assembly/Local Church) Early Periodicals UK Worldiness Basics for Christians Autobiography Missions Biography Christology Soteriology (Salvation) Evangelism Introductions Faith Knowing God's Will Judgment Prayer Outlines Tabernacle Discipleship**

[more tags](#)



Get this widget!  
Visit the [Widget Gallery](#)

Visitors			See more▶
	405,966		274
	55,671		272
	40,130		266
	18,672		257
	17,659		248
	13,062		243
	10,818		239
	10,413		238
	7,838		234
	6,680		230
	5,039		208
	4,586		186
	4,250		185
	3,742		184
	3,378		177
	3,311		166
	2,979		165
	2,958		163
	2,920		159
	2,784		158
	2,447		157
	2,249		154
	2,090		153
	2,086		147
	2,083		146
	1,949		142
	1,901		129
	1,893		127
	1,586		127
	1,369		126
	1,266		122
	1,265		122
	1,218		118
	1,211		117
	1,095		115
	1,053		110
	1,034		108
	1,021		100
	941		97
	935		97
	889		92
	874		91
	848		90
	800		86
	776		86
	763		84
	759		83
	737		75
	729		70
	693		70
	678		65
	539		64
	534		62
	510		60
	498		58
	491		57
	436		56
	426		52
	417		50
	414		50
	403		49
	401		49
	399		48
	397		48
	389		47
	382		47
	381		46

but since there are four different men mentioned in the New Testament by this name, this method of identification is altogether inadequate. The four men are: Gaius, a Macedonian who was with Paul at Ephesus (**Acts 19:29**), Gaius of Derbe (**Acts 20:4**), Gaius of Corinth (**I Cor. 1:14. Rom. 16:23**), and this Gaius to whom John makes reference. Furthermore, between the mention of the first Gaius and the last some forty years transpired, making any identification by this means very improbable. John's letter re-veals the characteristics and the censure of this type of leadership.

*The characteristics:* **Pride:** "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence." **Arrogance:** "Receive ye us not." **Maliciousness:** "Prating against us with malicious words." **Obstructionism:** "And forbideth them that would (receive us)." **Callousness:** "And casteth them out of the church."

*The censure:* A divine *exposure*: It is recorded for our admonition in the Word of God. An apostolic *denunciation*: "If I come, I will remember his deeds." A *unique discipline*: It is very probable that John's threat resulted in apostolic discipline. The apostles had authority and power in this regard which were not transmitted to their successors. See Paul's action in connection with Hymenaeus and Alexander (**I Tim. 1:20**).

*The preferential:* A preferential leadership is one that results from popular choice. Obviously this is what happened at Corinth (**I Cor. 1:11-17**). In dealing with this matter the Spirit of God graciously veils the names of the actual leaders, and transfers the whole incident to the names of Paul and Apollos (**I Cor. 4:6**). The Spirit of God thus, albeit inoffensively, sternly rebukes a popularity leadership, and exposes its characteristics with censure.

*Its characteristics:* Its *source*: carnality, "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (**I Cor. 3:4**). Its *practice*: "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ" (**I Cor. 1:12**). Its *consequences*: It is incisive and produces schisms in the church. "Let there be no divisions among you; ... there are contentions among you" (**I Cor. 1:10-11**). Its *results*: immaturity: "Babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (**I Cor. 3:1-2**). Its *issue*: pride, "Learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up" (**I Cor. 4:6**).

Its *censure*: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (**I Cor. 1:13**). Paul's rebuke to following men of carnal choice is couched in three rhetorical questions all of which imply a wrong done to the Lord Jesus Christ: *First*, to the person of Christ; "Is Christ divided?" Both bodily and mystically Christ is one. *Second*, to the work of Christ, "Was Paul crucified for you?" Can it be that salvation has come through a human leader and not through Christ? *Third*, to the name of Christ, "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Elsewhere Paul states, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ." As in the case of Israel who were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (**I Cor. 10:2**) which meant that they were now under the leadership of Moses; even so, those who have been baptized into Jesus Christ have placed themselves under His exclusive leadership.

*The spiritual:* "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (**Phil. 1:1**). That the bishops and deacons at Philippi formed a truly spiritual leadership seems evident. They were, first, distinctively recognized; second, apostolically approved; third, in their leadership they conformed to the scriptural order (**I Tim. 3**). Similar qualities may be noticed in the leadership provided by the elders in the church at Ephesus (**Acts 20:17-31**).

## Methods of Leadership

We must also take into consideration followers as well as leaders. As leaders may differ in qualities and ability so also may followers. To illustrate: some persons are more emotional than others, some have more initiative than others, and some are more readily susceptible to extraneous influences than others. Obviously all cannot be led by the same method. One person may be led by counselling, another by directing, and still another by suggesting.

Let us notice how the Apostle Paul led others in the Christian pathway.

*The emotional:* This type of personality has, as we say, more heart than head. He acts according to his feelings rather than through reason. The emotional person acts in haste and repents at leisure. We may consider Peter of the emotional type. At Antioch he hastily associated with Gentile believers, and just as quickly withdrew from them because of the fear of James and those visiting from Jerusalem (**Gal. 2:11-21**). Although Paul sternly rebuked him for acting in such a hypocritical way, he counselled with him, and reasoned the matter out from the divine standpoint.

Peter was helped by this rebuke and counsel; they strengthened him so that he was able to defend Paul and Christian liberty at the Church council in Jerusalem (**Acts 15:16-17**). There was no resentment in Peter's heart toward Paul for in his old age he wrote about "our beloved brother Paul" (**I Pet. 3:15**).

*The initiative:* The person with initiative has the power to do, and the ability to originate. In modern parlance, he is capable of creative thinking and skilful accomplishment. Luke the beloved physician would be in this category. This man who wrote two volumes on the history and origin of the early Church would surely be a man of initiative.

It is assumed by many that Paul in addressing himself to his "true yokefellow" in **Philippians 4** was actually addressing himself to Luke. If this assumption is correct, in so doing, he was only directing him to help two estranged sisters in the Lord, Euodias and Syntyche. He did

not reason that this was the proper thing to do, nor did he tell him how to do it. Paul realized that a directive was sufficient for this brother of initiative.

In leading a man with initiative, it is only necessary to indicate the proper direction.

*The susceptible:* There are many followers who respond quickly to a suggestion, and, in fact, go beyond what they are asked. It is not necessary to counsel and reason with them; you merely make the suggestion and they are ready to act.

There is a lovely character of this type in the New Testament, Philemon. In his personal epistle to this beloved brother, Paul says that he could have directed him, could have imperatively told him what to do, but instead, he laid the facts before him, and then added, "but without thy mind would I do nothing" (Philem. 14), and further, "Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do more than I say" (V. 21).

Each personality is different, and must therefore be treated wisely. If treated otherwise, some will refuse to follow, and some may even stumble and stray. It is impossible that the sheep of Christ's flock follow one who divides and scatters them. There is a need for leaders to remember the exhortation of Paul at Miletus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (**Acts 20:28**).

### Purpose of Leadership

Among Christian leaders there are hunters and shepherds, and the purposes of these are altogether different. A shepherd will give his life for the safety and comfort of his sheep.

*The hunter:* The Apostle Paul in **Acts 20:29-30** warns of dangers to the flock from both without and within. Wolves from without (**John 10:12**), wolves in sheep's clothing (**Matt. 7:15**) will not spare the flock; they will ravage the sheep.

The Apostle also warns of danger from within, from among the elders themselves would some arise to draw away disciples after them. "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (**Acts 20:30**). Such false teachers would engage in heretical doctrines. Two of these very leaders are named in **I Timothy 1:19-20**, and another in **II Timothy 2:17**.

The purpose of such men is to establish themselves as the head of a group or a party; their efforts are schismatic.

*The shepherd;* In **Colossians 1:28-29**, the finest human leader in the Christian Church tells of *the purpose* before him in all his service, and the service of his associate, Timothy. It was to present every man perfect (fully mature) in Christ. To do this he had a *method*, "preaching," "warning," "teaching," every man in all wisdom. He also showed *zeal*, "I also labour, striving." These words picture a man toiling to the point of exhaustion, even as an athlete in the arena. He likewise tells us from whence he secured *the energy*. God was the source of all his energy, "I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily."

What a contrast between the hunter whose efforts are to draw men after him, and the shepherd who exhausts himself in caring for others in order to present them perfect in Christ! These are the leaders who are much needed in the churches of the saints today.

### Tests on This Chapter

1. Name three men mentioned in the Old Testament who possessed exceptional qualities of leadership.
2. Who in your judgment was the greatest leader in the early Church?
3. What qualities induce believers to follow a leader?
4. Name the suggested different types of leadership.
5. How did the Apostle John censure one of the carnal types of leadership?
6. What distinguished the assembly oversight at Philippi?
7. Should elders in an assembly develop a fixed pattern of guidance?
8. Name some of the ways in which persons differ.
9. Name some different methods which influence followers.
10. What is the purpose in Christian leadership?

---

◀ Chapter 3: The Church Local:  
Constitution, Character and  
Maintenance

up

Chapter 5: Church Government:  
Representative and Operative ▶

---

